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Chapter one: Hi dad...

[image]

[Florida's P.O.V.]
[Twenty minutes ago]

O

Okay, believe it or not, everything was going fine. Arizona was on fire, Nevada was gambling, New York was on the phone (wich he wasn't allowed to have) demanding pizza, and I was attempting to take Rhode Island prisoner so dad would have to give my pet alligator back as compensation.

Everything was going great.

That is, until, I got bored because Rhode Island was hiding under Texas's bed so I couldn't get him.

So, like any sane person would, I started a riot.

Present time:

I

paced, staring at the tall fence blocking us from freedom before turning to face the group in front of me.

"Bring forth the ladder!"
I yelled.

Alaska placed the tall ladder against the wooden fence and I started to speak.
"Today we feast on pizza."

-New York started cheering.-

"Celebrating the fact Dad has a ladder in the garage; but also the fact that no one can stop us now!" I pointed to the ladder. "It is

time-"

"Wait...!" Ohio glanced around with wide and nervous eyes.
"Shouldn't we stay together?"

I sighed. I knew this moment would come.
"Of course, Buckeye." I lied.
Instead of doing something as small as taking over a pizza place, my plan was bigger. *Much bigger.*

I was going to break into the Countryhumans building and spy on dad and everyone else. I'd never seen another country other than dad before, and I heard we had family. I was especially interested in an uncle they called 'Aussie' because he has strange pets too.

"Enough chit-chat let's go!" Arkansas crossed his arms.

I don't know how, but we got all 50 of my siblings over the fence. And oh.my.goodness.

It was boring.

No one told me we lived in the middle of no where!
Where are all the cars and streets!?

I pulled put the phone I had bought from New York and put in the directions to the Countryhumans building.

Wow, its not that far.

I turned to my siblings.
"I'll be back in a minute I've got to use the bathroom."
I turned and walked into the shade of trees until I was out of sight and glanced at the phone again. I was going the right way.

...

I am currently in the vents of the Countryhumans building looking at the meeting. I dont want to talk about how I got in this tiny place, but I did. And I kind of feel bad for leaving my siblings, but it'll be okay. If they can't find that pizza place Idaho can smell fresh potatoes from a mile away, so they won't starve.

I just really wanted to see my family other than dad and my siblings...

I see dad whispering to some guy in a racoon hat. That must be Canada! Oh wow! And the guy with the tea must be Britain! What would he say if he knew I was here?

I suddenly have a chilling feeling. Maybe I should go.

I start to turn around in my vent when I feel something beneath me that makes my heart skip a beat.
The vent was giving out beneath me.

"Aah!" I scream as I feel myself fall downwards.. Dad's gonna be so mad.

I land hard, falling onto my hands wich gave out so I rolled over and hit my back, groaning. Luckily I didnt land on the table though.

I look up to see every country in the room stare at me in shock. This is great. A random fifteen year old boy just fell through the ceiling. I see dad staring at me in both surprise and confusion along with shocked worry.

"Hi dad..." I slightly wave. "Am... am I in trouble...?"

PLEASE READ THIS

I did NOT mean to publish this chapter, this was just me attempting to write the second chapter, I only noticed my mistake now and the second chapter I am going to publish will come out soon I apologize!

Chapter Two (the one I meant to Publish)

[Still Florida's P.O.V]

I feel slightly lightheaded and lean back on my arms to stop myself from lying back down on the floor. Voices rise from all around me, though they all seem muffled.

A familiar shape rushes to my side and puts his hand up to the side of my head. I attempted to push dad away but he stays by my side and another girl rushes over to me.

Wait...

Is she a *cat?* I must've hit my head pretty hard...
How am I ever going to explain this? It will completely ruin my reputation if my siblings find out about my childlike fascination with our family. Not to mention the other countries are sure to know about me sooner or later, now.

The cat-girl takes something out of her purse and puts it up to her ear. I'm guessing it's a phone. All the sounds around me are muted and things are starting to blur.
I look back to see dad's mouth moving as though talking to me, but I can't hear whatever it is. And I don't really care.

There's a blur of countries in the background, but before I can focus on who they are, I feel myself start to black out. I grit my teeth and lie on my back, knowing I was going to pass out if I wanted to or not. I might as well give in now.

. . .

I

Blink open my eyes to see a strange figure standing over me.

I know it's not one of my siblings or dad because they are way too tall and have a strange fluffy hat.

As my vision clears I can make out the details on his face. He has three stripes on his flag, the top one being white, the middle one blue, and the bottom one red.

Hold up, where am I!?

I jerk upright, startling the man. I feel my heartbeat in my ears. I'm in a different room, but in a meeting room in the same building, I know that for sure. I see the familiar face of the American Red Cross and push her away from me.

"Who are you?" I snap to the man, breaking off my question as I see his height.
I've been told I'm tall, but this man was *tall.* He towered over me from where I sat on the floor.

"I am Rrrussia." He held out his hand to help me up. I narrowed my eyes at his thick accent, though inside I was quite relieved. I couldn't tell anyone how many times I've heard dad say that name, so I know he's trustworthy.

I take his hand and stand up, my heart quickening as I remember my siblings. How long had I been out? Are they okay? Did anyone find them? Though I would never let anyone know I'm worried, I'm not heartless like everyone thinks.

"So what's yourrr name?" The Russian asked, making me jump out of surprise.
Dad must not have told anyone about us yet. Wait, where is dad?

"Florida..." I answered uncertainly.

"Good now-" Russia started.

"What where you doing here?" A hostile voice hissed.
I looked past Russia to see a country with an eyepatch. He was only Slightly taller than me, and was giving me a death glare.

"You guys left the front door unlocked," I shrugged, smiling.

The country faltered and glanced at the closed door behind him. "South!" He yelled, annoyed.

"Yeah?" Another country walked into the room and I chuckled. "Whats so funny?" He asked curiously.

"Its nothing, its just that..." I smiled. "If you're Coca Cola, do you hate Pepsi?"

The first country made a face and looked away, though I could see he was hiding his amusement while as the one he called 'South' didn't seem to know how to react.

"I'm South Korea and this is my brother, North Korea." South said after a moment.

"I'm Florida. And do you know where America is, by any chance?" I added.

"I knew it!" North Korea spat before his brother could speak and stood in front of me. "Do you work for him? What has he told you? What's he paying you?" North grabbed the collar of my shirt.
Out of pure reflex I push him away, and as he loosens his grip on me I kick his legs out from under him and he is lying on the ground on his side.

I feel Russia's hand on my shoulder and I flinch but don't move. Why are all these countries so touchy?

"아야! What was that for?" (Ow!) North Korea snapped at me as his brother helped him up.

"I– have you ever heard of personal space?" I shot back.

Just then the doors to the room open and I hold back a sigh of relief as I recognize dad enter the room. He pauses as he looks at the scene in front of him.

Chapter three: water balloons

[image]

[America's P.O.V]

Me and Florida walk along the dirt road in silence, both avoiding eye contact by staring blankly at our feet.
Meanwhile, in this awkward quiet, I am rethinking my life choices.

Less than what I think was about fifteen minutes ago I walk into the room with Florida in it to see North Korea on the ground, South Korea trying not to smile as he was helping his brother up, Florida was staring at me, and Russia was also trying not to smile smugly at the fallen Korean.

Apparently Florida had kicked North Korea to the ground when he had gotten too close. Too bad he didn't know an unspoken rule for all the states: *Dont* touch Florida or get in his space, along with making him mad.

I smiled, but it quickly faded at the memory.

I'm pretty sure North Korea hates me now. Well, more than he did. If thats even possible.

But at least no one found out who Florida is, or anything about my states.
I had to say that I would take care of Florida and handle the situation on my own, and it actually took like a full minute for everyone else to realize that I wasn't joking.
And who wouldn't think I was joking? I know that if I was one of the other countries, I would think I was joking, too.
And my dad, Great Britain, had scoffed at me and asked if I've ever even seen a kid in my whole life before.

'Oh you have no idea.' I thought, rolling my eyes. Not that anyone could notice, with my sunglasses.

But he does have a point, in a way. I'm just a lousy 24 year old who can't do anything right, and has 51 kids. Insane kids, I might add. Honestly, I don't know what I'm doing anymore. The only thing I ever think about is my states. I can hardly remember the last time I had fun. Or any time alone, for that matter.

I jolt from my thoughts as I feel a tap on my shoulder, and look down to see Florida glaring at me. He also looked a little nervous, too, if its possible to look both annoyed and scared at the same time.
"You weren't listening, were you?" He snapped, glancing around as though looking for something.

Normally I would scold Florida for his tone, but I was still feeling guilty for even thinking about leaving my states alone when I don't really have to.

I was about to respond when suddenly a yell from overhead made us freeze.

"

Attack!"

I looked up to see dozens of figures in the trees, all swarming the branches like ants. Before I can make out who or what they are, I feel something hit my head. Water immediately flies everywhere, drenching my clothes and hair.
I yelp in surprise and jump back, tripping on a tree root and falling backwards.
The shadows drop from the trees, still throwing water balloons, before Florida takes one and throws it directly in one's face from across the clearing. The figure he threw it at looks shocked for a moment, then wipes his hair out of his face and yells.
"Stand down guys! It's Florida!"

"I know! That's why I yelled 'attack'!"
Another person calls, and I blink.

"New York? Alabama?" I stand up, adjusting my sunglasses on my

face.

Immediately the first figure, wich was New York, turned to me and gasped.
"New Jersey! You soaked dad."

"Well it's not my fault he just happen to be in the exact spot I threw the balloon." New Jersey huffed, looking down at his feet.

I rush over to California, who was gently climbing down a tree with Hawaii in her arms. Hawaii smiles at me as California steps to the ground and looks up at me.

"Is everyone here?" I ask, taking Hawaii and looking around the crowd slowly gathering around.
I hear about thirty or so 'yes's.
"Good." I sigh, letting out a breath I didn't know I'd been holding.
"Now what were you guys thinking? All I need you do to is not do anything crazy for less than two hours, thats it. Just two hours." I notice Florida hugging himself as though he was cold.
"And you know what happens? You guys nearly expose yourselves. What would have happened if that wasn't me or Florida you ambushed?"
I decide not to mention the fact that Florida broke into my meeting. I know the other states will scold him themselves, and I don't want to embarrass him more than I have to.

I wait a moment to let my words seep in. New York sniffed and played with his wet hair and Mississippi looked away.
I finally gave in and led the way back to the house. I would figure out how they got out of the yard later.
"Come on guys. Let's go home."

Chapter four: It's showtime.

[I know that this chapter is really short, and I may have posted late. (I've lost track of time in quarantine.) If you haven't noticed, I'm trying to post every week or so, but, sadly, life is keeping me busy. but I'm really enjoying writing this story and the next chapter will be longer! Enjoy!]

[Texas's P.O.V]

I watch Florida out of the corner of my eye.

It's been a few days since he got out and broke into the Countryhumans building, and I'm not quite sure I forgive him yet. How could he just leave us there alone? And, thanks to Ohio trying to be a good younger brother, we stood out on the dirt road for what seemed like hours. And we didn't even get any pizza out of it.

"Why can't you guys go bother Louisiana?" An irritated voice snapped me from my thoughts.

"Because she's no fun! She'll just kick us out." I heard what I think was Washington complaining from another room.

"She won't if you two stop being so annoying." The first voice, I'm not sure who, replied quietly. But not quietly enough.

"Hey! We're not annoying! I-" Washington was cut off by a child giggling.

"Hawaii! Put the action figure down!" The first voice said in a panic.

"Well maybe you thould learn to put your dolls away." Washington snickered.

"They are not dolls!"

"She sure thinks they are."

I groaned, falling backwards onto my bed and earning a glance from Kentucky, who was eating some chicken.
It had been raining for hours and everything was soaked, so there was no use going outside. The only thing stopping Kansas and Idaho from going out there to plant wheat and potatoes was dad worrying about them getting sick.
Dad has really been on edge, too, talking about some bees, and stuff about getting sick and whatnot.
I don't really pay attention to that, though.

"Hey Kentucky can I-" I was interrupted by rapid knocking on our window and a muffled, panicked voice.
Florida immediately jumped up and open the window and I sat up, surprised to see Idaho and Wisconsin scrambling through the windowsill inside the room.

"Close the door." Wisconsin panted. I got up and closed it, locking the door behind me and staring curiously at my brothers.

Idaho was gripping a potato sack and held it close as he caught his breath. Both boys were completely soaked, from water dripping from their clothes to visibly shivering and chattering their teeth.
I looked around for something that could help warm them, but there wasn't really anything that was waterproof in here.

"Where is it?" Florida leaned forward.

"Where's what? What are you guys doing?"
We all jumped and turned to see Louisiana standing in the open doorway of our room.
"And why are Idaho and Wisconsin soaked?"

"Didn't I lock the doo-" I started, but Louisiana gave me a warning glare. Can I ever finish a sentence around here?

"We went swimming." Wisconsin said sarcastically.

"Good to know." Louisiana smiled, closing the door behind her before sitting down next to us.
After a moment of silence she rolled her eyes and sighed. "Go on. I might not tell dad."

Idaho reached into his sack that read 'Idaho Spuds' and pulled out...

Not a potato, but a tape recorder.

. . . *And* a potato in the other hand...

My brother smiled and steadily met our confused looks with a smug gaze.
"It's showtime."

chapter five: Into the forest

[Louisiana's P.O.V.]

"It's showtime."

Idaho smirked and pressed a button on the rectangle box.
Click.

At first the only sound the audio made was the snickering and giggling of my brothers, but focused in more on strange accented voices in the background, along with the the steady patter of rain.

"Why are we doing this again?" A girl, sounding about twenty-four, asked.

"Well..uh...y-you don't have to come if you don't want to. I'm just checking to make sure he's alright." A nervous-sounding guy responded.

"I'm sure he's fine, don't..." The girl's voice was drown out by my brothers attempting to hold back laughter before the line cut.

The whole room was quiet. Either it was quiet with disappointment that the recording was useless, or quiet because none of us understood what the audio meant.

"...so.." Texas shifted uncomfortably on his bed.

Wisconsin let out a sigh. "Don't you see? There are intruders in the forest!"

"It seems like they were talking about dad, maybe?" I suggested. "But why would they be worried about him?"

"Lunch is ready, guys!" We all jumped at the sound of dad's voice coming from downstairs and exchanged glances as we heard our siblings running down the halls.

Kentucky slowly stood, but Texas shook his head. We waited for the stomping of our siblings to die down before speaking once more.

"Maybe they're close to him in some way?" Idaho shrugged.

"I think we've already figured that out." Kentucky sighed. "What did they look like? How long will it take for them to get here?"

"There was just the two you heard on the recording. A guy with a red maple leaf on his face and a woman with a blue and yellow face." Wisconsin said.

"We used the latter from a few days ago. They were about in the middle of the forest." Idaho butted in.

I blinked. That was really close to the house. Dad still hadn't found the latter, even though he had spent hours looking for how we had gotten out. Because of this, we had taken several trips outside and had explored almost every step of the forest (wich had turned out to be just a thin line of trees). But dad has been trying his best to keep us 'safe' by not letting us out of his sight.
I know he's just worried about us, but he can be really overprotective sometimes.

"So what do you say we do about it?" I asked.

"I say we make them go away." Florida stated bluntly, making us all jump. He had been quiet for so long, I wouldn't be surprised if at least one of us had forgotten he was still here.
"What would happen if they found Hawaii or someone else out there? What if they took one of us?"

After a moment of silence, Texas stood up and adjusted his hat. "I agree. We need to do something. Dad obviously doesn't know about this, otherwise he would be freaking out."

Kentucky nodded. "We don't have long before they reach the house, so we need to figure out what we're doing and fast."

"I vote we scare them." Idaho said darkly. "We could take Montana's bear."

"That's too easy." Florida frowned. "We need to make sure they don't come back."
After a moment, he smiled.

A shiver went down my spine. Whatever Florida is planning, it can't be good.

[Fifteen minutes later]

[Rhode Island P.O.V]

Texas, Kentucky, California, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Alaska, and me all stood in Florida's room with Idaho handing out camo outfits. As my brother does this, though, I am slightly worried about how Florida has affected him in the last five minutes.
A moment ago he had taken Idaho aside and told him something, but I couldn't hear what. The only thing I know now is that Kentucky, Kansas, Louisiana, and Idaho all have devilish grins plastered to their faces.

Florida had explained the plan to us, and I'm almost sure my heart is beating so loud in my chest that Massachusetts, who is next to me, can hear it.

You know what? I don't know why I'm doing this. All I wanted was just a day to relax, where nothing bad happened.
I never planned on there to be countries out in the forest heading for the house.
Now that was... a surprise.
But this? *This* is a disaster just waiting to happen.
I don't know why, but I just have a gut feeling not to do this. Am overthinking this? Why am I not happy? The other states are finally noticing me, so why do I have such a bad feeling that something is going to go wrong? Like maybe dad will find out? No, that's not it. Is it? That can't be. Then why-

"Rhode Island." Florida was looking down at me."I have a job for you." He smiled warmly and placed his hand reassuringly on my shoulder. "Into the forest."

[Hi everybody I tried to make this chapter interesting, and I have great plans for the next part of the story. Well, now that I'm actually writing this very last bit I don't know what to say here, but have a great whatever time it is you're reading this!]

Chapter six: In the treetops

[California P.O.V.]
(Present time)

I paused and waited patiently as Florda motioned to Alaska and pointed down the stairs.

"You can't catch me!" I heard someone from another room laugh. Dad was probably playing tag with the others.

Alaska crept down the hall and stopped at the edge of the staircase, leaning forward and looking around the corner. He then turned back to us and gave a thumbs up, signaling that the coast was clear. Massachusetts nodded and took his place, keeping watch. Arizona blinked and silently bolted across the hall to the back door. She struggled with the door knob.

Was it locked?

Creeeeeeak

My breath caught in my throat as the high pitched sound echoed through the silent air.
Did dad hear?

Arizona stayed stiff for a moment before finally giving us a thumbs up. At least she got the door open.
Even if it might have woken the dead.

Once we got outside, rain pounded against our faces. I heard someone mutter something under their breath, but I was too focused on Kentucky to bother find out what they had said.

My brother was smiling and talking to Florida with Louisiana, Idaho, and Kansas behind him.
Florida slightly smiled and pointed over to the forest. "Make sure you..."

"Hi California!"
I whipped around, only too see no one there. Weird. But why would someone talk to me?
I turned back to see the small group Kentucky had gathered was gone. Where were they? I couldn't have missed them.

I looked around. Nothing.
How was that possible?
Wait, that's Florida!
Is he talking to Rhode Island?

I started to walk over to them, but Massachusetts gathered everyone around in a ragged circle. "Remember the plan and stay hidden." He instructed before turning and pointing at the line of trees where the intruders walk.
"Those trespassers are a danger to our society, and we must drive them out! To the trees!"

"To the trees!" Someone cheered.

Massachusetts held a fist into the air and marched across the rain-soaked roads, us following. I glanced wistfully back at our warm, dry house, but immediately focused more on the trail ahead of me. These new countries could be dangerous, and I want to protect my siblings. I don't know what I would do if something happened to them.

After what seemed like hours of walking, we finally reached the edge of the treeline. Florida waved and pointed up at the branches of an oak tree. Massachusetts smiled and ran up to it, taking a jump forward and grabbing the branch nearest to him.
The rest of us silently followed, and I pulled Texas up to a higher branch when he began to struggle holding on to the slick bark.

I shakily stood, holding my arms out for balance as I walked along the branch. Mine and Texas's shadows danced strangely the forest floor ahead of me.

Florida, who was on the branch of another, larger oak tree, made eye contact with me and motioned for us to follow.

Just as long as I don't look down, I'll be fine. Don't look down don't look down don't look down.

I took a deep breath to calm myself. There was nothing to fear, after all. Texas would help me. He's a good person.

Okay, just look straight ahead.

I took another step forward, letting out a frightened gasp as the branch bent beneath my weight.
Arkansas gave me a look through narrowed but worried eyes from farther up along our tree-path, but did nothing to ensure my safety.

I glared at him as he jumped to another tree.

After a moment's hesitation, I jumped to another Oak in front of me.
At least I didn't fall.
And it was kind of fun, too.

I smiled and walked farther along the branch. I jumped again. This time the branch swayed from side to side, but a sound caught my attention.
Were those voices?

Texas had stopped, too, and so had the others. I looked down and stared.

"Honestly, I don't don't know how you slip on everything. Even leaves when there's one on your face." A woman was kneeled down by a guy who was holding his arm up gingerly to his stomach. He winced as she grabbed a bandage from her bag and started to wrap the arm.

He was hurt!

A wave of guilt washed over me. He needs help, and all we're going to do is drive them out of the forest.

Florida clenched his fist and narrowed his eyes thoughtfully.
For once I wish I knew what my crazy brother was thinking.

Luckily, though, we were in camo outfits and the trees still had

hundreds of leaves, so there was no way the intruding countries could see us.

The hurt man stood up, giving a weak smile and revealing the red maple leaf on his face. "Thanks Ukraine."

Ukraine. What a pretty name.

The woman, Ukraine, shrugged sheepishly and packed the leftover bandages in her bag.
"Don't mention it. Let's just get to America's house and we can use his phone to call a doctor for your arm."

America. Dad. So they *do* want to see dad.

I'm not sure what to do. The maple leaf guy is hurt and needs a doctor, but we can't let him get to dad and everyone else. We can't just leave them out here, though.

I took a breath. This was going to be harder than I thought.

Chapter seven: Canada

[Canada's P.O.V]
(Two minutes earlier)

"So you know Russian?" I asked Ukraine as we walked along the leaf-covered path.

"Yeah. Want me to teach you some?" Ukraine grinned. "When Russia's mad, call him a бедняга." (Poor angered fellow)

"What does that mean?" I asked, but Ukraine had already taken off down the path. "Hey! Wait up!" I ran after her, smiling.

"You can't catch me!" Ukraine taunted, turning around and sticking her tongue out.

"Oh you just wait!" I yelled, trying not to laugh.

I almost slipped on the wet leaves below me. The rain had turned into a steady drizzle and had soaked everything in sight.

Ukraine was about fifteen feet ahead of me, but I'm not one of the fastest runners alive, so I know I have almost no chance of catching up to her any time soon.

But, lucky for me, I see she has to round a turn, so I break off from the path and push through a bramble thickett. I wince at thorns poking at my arms, but that doesn't matter. I can use this shortcut to block Ukraine off.

I can see Ukraine's outline through the trees and smile. I just need to keep running and I'll catch up to her.

Suddenly my foot slips out from under me and I let out a panicked yelp, falling backwards onto the wet ground. I land hard on my wrist.

(Present time)

"Are you sure you're okay?" Ukraine looks down at me with worried eyes, but I couldn't bring myself to look back at her.

This was so embarrassing. Why did this have to happen to me right now? I know I'm clumsy, but this was really the worst time to get hurt.

And my arm might be broken.

"Yeah I'm fine." Wait did my voice just crack? "I just wanna get to America's house."

[Ukraine's P.O.V]

Finally the first aid box closed with a loud snap and I let out a sigh of relief. I don't want to spend all day trying to close a little box.

I glanced up a the sky.

Maybe it's just the clouds, but it's kind of getting dark. We might as well just spend the night at America's because I am not walking in the dark.
Too bad Canada couldn't convince Russia to come with us. If he came, he would be forced to leave his car here and we could take it back home.

I am kind of worried about Canada, though. He's not really looking at me and he's been pretty quiet since I wrapped his arm.
Just another reason to get to America's house before it's so dark we can hardly see. And I don't want Canada to get sick out here, what with all this sickness going around.

"Well come on then. Let's get going." I motioned for Canada to go ahead of me up the path.

He nodded solemnly and walked along, fiddling with his hands.

I, meanwhile, looked around. Who would've known America lives out in the middle of nowhere? Actually, I don't think anyone really knew where he lives. Even Canada didn't know, so we had to ask U.N. and people like that.
It honestly would've been easier if we had just asked America, but

no, apparently that would given away our plan.

But why would he like to live so far away from everyone? Especially him? I would think America of all people would want to live right in the middle of a huge, overcrowded city just to throw parties and annoy someone's ears off.

He's usually so confident and full of himself, and seems to always want to be around *somebody*. It never matters who.
And I don't think I've ever seen him alone before. Well, when he is he's probably on his phone.

"Hey Canada?" I ask, not taking my gaze from the path.

"Yes?" His expression brightened and he looked up at me as though he had just been given a gift.

"Why do you think America took that Florida kid?" I frowned. "That's not like him, is it?"

Canada sighed, hesitating before responding. "No, it's not. And Florida had asked North where America was before..." he smiled slightly.

"How do you think they know each other? America was so quick to-" I broke off as something rolled out from beneath a holly bush.

Is that a. . .

Chicken wing?

Both Canada and I froze.

"Ew, now look what you did!" An irritated voice sounded from the large bush.

"It's not my fault! You wouldn't let me use potatoes." Another boy replied.

"So you use my chicken wing!?"

"Sshh!" Someone else hushed them, and the talking bush went

silent.

"Wha-" I started to speak, but Canada stepped forward towards the haunted bush. "Canada!" I whisper-yelled.

I know I probably shouldn't be scared, but I can feel my heart racing.

Four pairs of eyes shown from between the branches of the holly. These people looked like kids.

I took a breath and stepped out in front of Canada, blocking his path and ignoring his irritated sigh as I did so. "Who are you? Come out." I ordered, struggling to keep my voice calm.
If these are kids, I don't want to scare them off right now.

"Look what you two did!" A girl hissed quietly.

"He took my chil- I mean my chicken." The first boy hurriedly corrected himself.

Was he just about to call a chicken wing his child? Huh. . .

"I'm Canada." Canada pushed past me and kneeled down closer to the bush, causing for a frightened gasp to sound and rapid rustling of the bushes as though these small people were trying to get as far away from him as they could.

I wanted to ask Canada exactly *what* he thought he was doing, but kept my mouth shut. He's going to scare them away.

"Y-yeah well you better run!" A new girl attempted to sound mean. "You aren't welcome here!"

'You aren't welcome here'? What does that mean?

There was a small huff of annoyance and a sarcastic but quiet 'nice going'.

"Why don't you come out?" Canada urged and I winced. He was not doing a very good job at this.
Not that I could do better.

"Retreat!" The first boy yelled. Suddenly a white and red box flew up into the air and I sidestepped as it landed next to me.

It read 'KFC' on the side and had a human man on the top.

"Kentucky!" The fist girl –a bag that said Popeyes on the front in hand– exploded from the bushes after him, followed closely by a boy with a potato sack.

"Idaho! Louisiana! You said you wouldn't leave me!" A small girl ran after them, tripping on a branch and falling to the ground. She had a bag of wheat that tumbled down with her.

Canada immediately went to help her up, only to be intercepted by a teen boy with a golden Indian on his face.

Did he just fall from the sky? I thought, somewhat shocked. ***They are making this way more dramatic than it needs to be.***

"My sister doesn't need your help!" He glared at Canada, but didn't move to help his sibling.

[Florida's P.O.V]

No! This isn't how this was supposed to go. The main rule is to *not* be seen, not play hero and expose yourself!

They know that we're here and now we have no chance of scaring them off.

I sighed. Great.

chapter eight: Caught

[Florida's P.O.V]

Okay fine...
Maybe I'm being a little harsh, but why are my plans failing all of a sudden? I haven't lost my thing, right?
I'm still Florida Man, aren't I? I'm still Florida. . .

You know, the one who, at the last moment, you don't know is mentally sane or not? The jokester, the one with some crazy plan!
But I can't fix this. And I couldn't help that I fell through the tiles of the ceiling at dad's office.
. . . Right?

"Florida?" I turned to see Arkansas staring at me. "Are you okay?"

Confused, I looked around to find I had been crushing a small branch with my hand.
Oh. Well that makes sense.

"Yeah, I'm fine." I shrugged my brother off and looked back down at the scene.

Massachusetts had jumped down and defended Kansas while the others ran, all yelling at each other. If they can't get along in a bush for ten minutes, how they've gone their whole lives without absolutely. . . well, let's just say they haven't killed each other yet.
. . . Yet.

Well, there's no point in going through with the plan now.

But I want to know what these countries will do.

I continued to watch as the scene unfolded and sat down -quite uncomfortably I might add- on the large tree branch I had been standing on a moment earlier.

"We 'ought to do something." Texas grumbled, but I ignored him.

Leaf face, also known as Canada, jumped back in surprise and stood by Ukraine, who looked somewhat both dumbfounded and irritated at the same time.

"Wait, don't go." Ukraine's attempt at sounding soothing failed horribly. "We won't hurrt you."

By this point Kansas had already gotten to her feet and was running to the trees where the remaining members of my group hid.

I know that these countries won't hurt us, but I feel sick just thinking about having to leave the safe shelter of the trees to speak with them.
They must think we're crazy.
Actually, I am crazy, so that doesn't matter.

I kept still as Kansas ran up to Arkansas's tree and attempted to reach the shortest branch. Wow, she might be even shorter than Rhode Island.

Rhode Island.

Oh.

Whoops.

"Oh! There's more of them. . ." Canada stared up at the trees, his -disappointed?- gaze landing on me. The kid who broke into his meeting. The kid America was so desperate to take.
. . . And the kid who kicked North Korea to the ground.

Heh. . .
Yeah, now that was my fault.

I stood up defiantly, casting a slight glare at the countries to let them know I am not pleased with what has just happen.

"I am Florida." I state bluntly, steadily meeting Ukraine's hostile gaze. "And I believe one of you is hurt?"

What am I supposed to say? 'You can't talk to my dad because you'll scare the poop out of everyone in the house'? No!

But they've already found out. What's the point of keeping this secret anymore? Why is it even a secret?
. . . I know why. And that's the whole reason we tried to scare off these countries in the first place. Last time someone found out. . .

I blinked away the memories of an innocent girl crying uncontrollably and not knowing what was wrong with her.
She's safe now.

Canada opened his mouth as to speak while holding his arm up gingerly, but Ukraine spoke first.
"He's fine." She paused. "Where arre yourrr parrents Florrda?"

I narrowed my eyes. I didn't know what I expected, actually. Why wouldn't she ask about parents?
I bet she wants me to give away something about Dad.

I sighed. I don't want to be the one to say something about America.

Arkansas, who had helped Kansas up to the same branch as him, snorted and glared at Ukraine. "And what makes you think we'll tell *you?"*
Arkansas voiced the word 'you' as though just saying Ukraine's name was an insult.

My brother is honestly quite caring, but at times he might just be the one to save us all with his bitter tone when Kansas is involved.

Well, desperate times call for desperate measures.
"It's fine Arkansas." I looked down at my feet. "There's no reason to be rude."

I could feel the shocked gazes of my siblings resting on me as I continued. "They have found us, so there's no point in hiding anymore."
I winced, disgusted at my words. Where did that come from? I'm starting to sound like dad when he does that stupid impression of Great Britain!

Alaska frowned. "Florida, are you feeling okay?"

"Lets just take them to see dad." I replied, gritting my teeth. What's

wrong with me?

"You can't be serious Florida!" Both Massachusetts and Arkansas snapped, seeming to not notice the other had even spoken.

"Alright, you have any bright ideas then?" I forced a smile. Why am I so mad?

My brothers went silent but continued to glare at me.

I open my mouth to apologize but instead turned to face the two countries.
"We'll take you to America."

chapter nine: We are the United States of America

[America's P.O.V]

I sighed and looked down at my kids from the stairwell.

Illinois was playing monopoly with Montana, Ohio was running away from New Jersey screaming, Washington was blowing raspberries at New York, Hawaii was somehow sleeping through this chaos, and West Virginia was singing Country Roads while using a toothbrush as a microphone.

"Go fish!" Illinois slapped a 'free parking' card onto the table.

"That's not how you play!" Montana looked like she just died inside.

I stopped listening to my states and instead decided to stress about my upcoming trip. I can feel heaviness dragging at my eyelids.

I went to the store yesterday to buy more fire extinguishers. Arizona had another fire and bumped into Utah, so Utah got another fire and then it just went down hill from there.

Anyway, I met my father, Great Britain, and he told me that I was assigned to some trip involving some people in Japan and that we would be gone for almost a week. I don't even want to think about how to take care of my states at the same time.
This trip is right after my vacation, which is tomorrow and lasts a week.

I closed my eyes.

Japan. Apparently she thinks I have unlimited energy and she keeps on bowing up my phone with texts like 'Hi America-Kun! How are you today? Me, South Korea, Russia, Canada, and Mexico are going to hang out if you want to come!'.

And I would say yes, but I don't think I have enough energy. They should be starting to worry about me soon.

Don't forget North Korea.

Oh. Yeah. Can't forget North Korea. He definitely hates me. I don't know-

Wait.

I looked around.

I'm hearing things. Now I know for sure I'm suffering from sleep deprivation.

Then get some sleep.

I jumped, looking around for whoever said that. I don't recognize this voice.

Whatever. I slept through the entire four hour meeting yesterday so I shouldn't be complaining about 'not having sleep'.
Although I think Russia and Canada are convinced somethings up with me. I shouldn't be too worried, though. It's not like they know where I live or anything.

Plus, if someone lives out in the middle of nowhere, I think they might want to be left alone.

But you don't.

"Yes I do." I whispered. "It's safer this way."

To my relief, the voice went silent.

"Daaaddd!"

I took a breath. Was something off here? It's. . .
quiet.

"Dad!"

"Georgia put that down!" I went down the stairs over to my

daughter. Still, something feels like it's missing here.

[Kansas's P.O.V]

I hid behind Arkansas as he glared defiantly at Canada and Ukraine. We were walking along the path to our house.

I need to be strong! This is Canada, after all. And I assume this 'Ukraine' girl is his girlfriend or something. I need to make a good impression.
I forced a friendly smile and stepped out from behind my brother.

To my relief, Florida was patiently speaking with these countries, and I stepped back behind Arkansas, who glanced back at me with an unreadable expression.

"So do you have an explanation forr this? And how do you know America?" Ukraine huffed, crossing her arms as we walked.

Wow, she's almost as sassy as Louisiana. But with a weird accent.

Canada looked back at Ukraine and smiled reassuringly. Ukraine's gaze softened and she looked away.

"You see," Florida suddenly seemed uncomfortable. "I guess you'll find out sooner or later."

"We're America's kids." Texas blurted out, as though he couldn't stop himself.

Ukraine froze and stared at Texas as though she were both shocked and suspicious.
Canada stopped walking, eyes wide, and sucked up a slight gasp.

"America doesn't have any kids. . ." Canada breathed out, through it sounded more like a question than statement.

"If that were true, who are we then?" Rhode Island, who looked like he'd been pouting a moment earlier, frowned.
"You think we look like Spain or Greece? Would you believe me if I walked over and said 'Hi I'm New Zealand'?"

California shifted uncomfortably on her feet. "He's right. Do we look like countries?"

I mutter something under my breath, and freeze as everyone looks at me.
My heart is racing.
Will I offend anyone?
No, of course not!
Ugh, stop thinking about this!

I step out from behind Arkansas.
"We are the United States of America. The states, I mean." I added, cringing at my words. I must sound so weird.
"Ever wonder where the name comes from? It's not just some silly joke. We are the states, and we, together, *are* America. We are almost every bit of his personality. Only one spot belongs to him, and that is your America."

I open my eyes. I guess I had closed them when I got nervous.
Everyone was still staring at me.
Even Arkansas was.
What? All I said is what they were trying to say!
What else should I say?

I hid back behind my brother. It's much easier to be an extrovert when it's just me and my siblings.

"We're here." Kentucky announced after a moment.

Suddenly a yell sounded by the house.
"Get it off! Get it off!" New Hampshire was screaming, running full speed with Minnesota chasing him.

"It's alright! Calm down!" She yelled. "It can't hurt you!"

"Get it off!" New Hampshire jumped to the ground, rolling in the still wet grass in attempt to get whatever it was off of himself.

California bolted forward, probably trying to help New Hampshire as Minnesota joined them.

America, meanwhile, was chasing Utah, who was on fire.

Apparently not noticing Canada and Ukraine, Utah let out a war cry and dashed right over to Arizona and Florida.

Arizona screamed and ran over to dad, who was holding a fire extinguisher, while Florida seemed rooted to the ground where he stood.
Navada was standing in the yard, eyes wide, staring directly at the new countries.

. . . America hadn't noticed yet.

He sprayed Utah with the fire extinguisher, watching the flames go out before Utah could catch Florida on fire.

He immediately got to his knees and wiped the foam-like substance off of Utah's face. "Are you okay?" He stood as Utah nodded and spoke once more. "You can't go after the others and try to pass fire on to them. How many times have I told you that?"
America stopped and looked over at us in sudden confusion before going pale as he saw Ukraine and Canada.

There was an awkward silence for a moment. Even Foam-Utah was quiet.

"Canada, Ukraine." Dad attempted a weak smile, but failed. "I-I can explain."

Chapters Ten: Meet The States

[image]

[Canada's P.O.V]

We sat on a leather couch in the middle of America's living room while my brother sat on a couch opposite of us.

I sat with my head down, fumbling with my hands.

America seemed somewhat distressed at my silence and shifted uncomfortably.

"Why is everryone acting so weirrrd about this?" Ukraine huffed. "You don't have kids, so who arrre these people?"

America winced at her words and sighed. "These are my kids."

"Then who's the mother?" Ukraine asked.

America's face flushed a bit pink, but one kid came to his rescue.

I don't think I have ever seen my brother so serious about something.

The kid was nearly taller than me, messy frost-bitten white hair and a pair of ear muffs as though he were already expecting winter. "We don't need a mother." He scoffed, though his mesmerizing ice blue eyes seemed to glow with interest. "We just appeared."

A smile crossed the boy's face and the slight tint of snowflakes on his cheeks shone in the bright sunlight.
"I'm Alaska, by the way." He put his hand out for me to shake.

I felt Ukraine stiffen beside me but she remained quiet as Alaska introduced himself.

I might be mad at America, but Alaska hasn't done anything wrong. His name does sound familiar, though.

I shake his hand in return.

I would introduce myself, but I'm pretty sure he already knows my name. Instead I just smile and nod to him, Alaska doing the same.

"So you have how many kids?" Ukraine questioned America.

America laughed nervously and rubbed the back of his neck. "Fifty-one."

I nearly choked on my spit. "You have Fifty-one kids?"

". . . Yeah."

Again, I'm not used to my brother, America, acting like this. He's suddenly quiet and so. . . I can't explain it.

But why would he keep his states a secret? We could have helped him! *I* could have helped him. He didn't even tell me. I thought we wouldn't keep secrets from each other! I thought we were friends.

I pushed the negative thoughts aside. Fine. If I want him to trust me, there's no point in holding grudges. I just have to support him in any way possible. Easy.

"Dad?" A voice jerked me from my thoughts. A small boy wearing a weird-looking wig going down to his waist tugged on America's shirt. "Hawaii is crying and she won't go back to sleep. She might be hungry."

America nodded and picked the boy up carefully. "Alright Washington. Why don't we get her something to eat?" The sudden change in my brother's voice kind of scared me. He sounded so happy and bright.

That left me and Ukraine alone with Alaska.

The teen boy looked at us for a moment before he spoke. "We snuck out of the house when dad was with the others. We thought. . . you might hurt one of us, so we took matters into our own hands." He looked at Ukraine, but refused to make eye contact with either of us.

Was he trying to take the blame of them escaping off America?

Ukraine seemed to become more and more uncomfortable with Alaska's every statement.

"Hey it's alright." I murmured, though more to Ukraine than Alaska. She didn't seem to notice.

"Aallaaasskaaa!" A voice from behind us dragged out the word and Alaska flinched.

"Yes?" He asked, turning to someone I couldn't see.

"Are you done yet? Washington just came over with Hawaii. He has pizza." The voice added.

Alaska sighed and faced me once again. "Do you mind if you meet the others?" He sounded as though he didn't know how to word that sentence.

I stood and smiled, though I honestly can't tell if I'm very excited or not. "Not at all. Let's go."

Alaska let us outside where a group of states stood, all staring at us. Some were glaring, others looked nervous, but a few smiled and waved in my direction.

[Alaska's P.O.V]

I quickly made my way over to my siblings, pushing through the crowd that didn't bother cast a glance toward me and stopped in the middle of the chattering chaos.
Finally.

Although I still don't approve of these new countries being here, I guess we should still be nice to them. It just doesn't seem right, there being new people here. This place is for us, not them.

And I understand that they didn't know about us, but can't they take a hint? Has anyone ever been to dad's house? No. Has he ever invited someone to our house? No. Has he ever talked about his house? Hopefully not.

And, let's be honest here, we live in the middle of nowhere.

They must be pretty dumb to come here.
I could go on and on, but Dad is talking to us while fixing Washington's president wig thing. You know, the one they wear in movies like one of the old guys in Pirates Of The Caribbean.

Washington was wearing a wig kind of like this

"Okay, uh, Canada and Ukraine," dad tripped over his words. "This is-"

Before dad could finish, a voice sounded from the large crowd. "Alabama!" Alabama cheered, and whooping sounds and more cheering followed.

I smiled. This was going to be fun. "And Alaska!" I yelled, putting my first into the air.

"Arizona." Arizona chuckled nervously.

"Arkansas." Arkansas hid his smile.

"California!"

"Colorado!"

"Connecticut and more!" Connecticut yelled.

"Delaware, Florida Georgia!" The three states chanted.

"Hawaii Idaho!" Idaho took Hawaii from Washington and held her up into the air, much to Washington's horror and Hawaii's delight at being so high up.

"Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, thirty-five to go!"

"Kansas and-" Kansas, with the help of about thirty of our siblings, cheered happily.

"Kentucky!" Kentucky yelled at the top of his lungs, jumping up and down as he did so.

"Louisiana-" Louisiana elbowed Kentucky as he bumped into her while jumping.

"Maine!"

"Maryland, Massachusetts," Just about every state was cheering now, a few pointing at Maryland and Massachusetts.

"And good ole' Michigan!" They cheered, seeming to not notice that the only one who had not spoken was the very annoyed Michigan himself.

"Minnesota, Mississippi," both states grinned.

"Missouri!"

"And Montana!" Montana pointed to her face and stuck her tongue out.

"Nebraska's 27, number 28's Nevada!"

As I listened to my siblings list more names, I noticed America was staring at us. Most likely because we started singing, or because he never taught us this song.

Ukraine, also, was staring at us like we were crazy people.
Wich we probably are, but we've been practicing this song every time America goes to work just after he leaves.

Most of the time we sing it when one of us is upset or hurt.
We may be young and stupid, but we aren't young and mean.
There's a difference.

"Could Wisconsin be the last state? Or was it 49?" Wisconsin, quite out of breath, panted.

"No, Whyoming is the last state! That's the Fifty states that rhyme!" Whyoming cheered and everyone–except for the countries, that is– started to break out into loud conversations, a few states still yelling.

"Pardon me, are you Aaron bu-" I slapped my hand over New York's

mouth and looked him dead in the eyes.

"That's, like, sooo 2015." I smiled at New York, who's eyes widened at me using his attitude against him.

I couldn't hold back a laugh as my brother pushed me away and ran off deeper into the crowd of states.

Okay, now that was funny.

And yes, I know we're all weirdos. But what's the point in being normal?

[Sorry if this was cringey/cringy-]

Chapter Eleven: Let's Build A Tree House

[image] [image]

It was nice for once. The meeting room was calm and collected. U.N. was talking about less air pollution, Germany was taking notes like the workaholic he is, Britain was quietly speaking with France, Japan was drawing some anime, and North and South Korea were bickering.
It was overall a good day.

That is, until, heavy footsteps could be heard coming from down the hall.

They started off as though the country were stumbling to the side, but eventually smoothed out to a somewhat normal pattern.

The country muttered under their breath before they let out a panicked yelp, and a heavy thud followed by a groan could be heard.
"Ow. . ."

A few countries stood and hurried over to the door, while others, such as Great Britain, stayed where they were with narrowed eyes. They knew what was coming.

"I-I'm okay! I just tripped on my shoelaces!"

It was here.

The American.

W-wait. . . Why is he covered in silly string? I-is this part of the script? You know what? Just skip to the states. . .

[No One's P.O.V]

"I'm bored." Montana sighed as she lay on the grass, looking up at the blue and white spotted sky.

A small gust of wind rustled the branches of a nearby tree, and Arizona shivered while Alabama stuffed his face deeper into his elbows as he sat at the foot of said tree.
Indiana snored sofly and Hawaii sat with Washington, plucking blades of grass from the ground while sticking her tongue out.

"Me too." Washington groaned impatiently. "Anyone have any suggestions?"

New York snorted at Washington's question, probably because-in his words-'the kid has finally stopped talking and is actually listening to others for once'. Or something like that. No one is really sure what is going on between them.

"Why don't we do something to keep random countries out?" New Jersey suggested. "Like, maybe a fence or something?"

Montana sat up, suddenly full of energy. "We need something to make sure they know the forest is ours. What about a tree house?"

"That'll take too long." Washington huffed, taking a crumpled leaf from Hawaii before she could eat it.

"Okay, do *you* have any ideas then?" New York glared.

Washington returned his brother's gaze. "No, I'm just saying. None of us want to spend all day building some block of wood in a tree."

"Hey! It's not just a 'block of wood'." Montana stood, glancing up at the branches of an oak. "It's. . . Different."

"Tree housse!" Hawaii, to everyone's surprise, beamed. "Three houssse!"

Washington quickly shushed her, but Hawaii started to laugh. "Three house three house three house!"

Yes, Hawaii was almost four years old, but she hardly ever spoke, so, naturally, this came as quite a surprise.

"Yes! Uh- th-three house! You've got it!" Montana smiled happily. "See? She agrees!"

New Jersey smiled and sat up, while New York seemed very unimpressed. Washington, however, accepted his defeat and watched as Hawaii jumped up and down while she attempted to cheer 'tree house'.

"But where do we get wood and nails? And a hammer?" Indiana's voice made everyone jump.

Arizona furrowed her eyebrows. "Well, there is that empty tool shed. That's pretty big. . . And I bet we could find something around here to use as a drill or something."

"Me and Florida both have hammers in our room, if that counts." Everyone stopped talking and stared at Alabama.

Arizona opened her mouth to speak, but thought better of it and shrugged her clear concern off nervously. "O-okay, well that's settled then."

"But we can't build it by ourselves." New Jersey countered.

"Why don't we get a group of states to help us? I mean, it's pretty obvious." New York muttered.

Washington collapsed onto his back and groaned. "But I don't want a bunch of kids running around our tree house."

"*You* are a kid." Scoffed New York. "You're, Like, seven."

"I'm nine!" Washington shot back. "Duh!"

New York glared. "Well I'm so sorry tha-"

"Hey, why don't we just get our supplies?" Indiana interrupted, looking very unamused.

"Fine, whatever." Washington stood and walked in the direction of the house. "I'm going to get our siblings."

"Oh no, not alone you aren't!" New York shot after him. "With our luck you'll pick Hawaii to design the whole thing."

"What? Is something wrong with her?" Washington snapped.

"I don't have anything against her, I'm just saying that you're going to pick someone weak."

"Then why are you here?"

[Time skip: three hours]

"*That* is what it's supposed to look like?" Connecticut gaped at Montana, who had New York's phone in her hand.

"Yep!" She responded, turning the phone back to her.

"Is that a slide?" Minnesota chimed in, looking over her sister's shoulder at the phone screen.

Montana smiled. "Yeah, but we would build more bridges and houses all around."

"That sounds good, but this will take probably a year to finish." Washington crossed his arms. "And dad will be home in less than twenty minutes. He took the whole of this week off, too."

Minnesota paused. "Hey, where is Hawaii?"
It was a sincere question, but Washington's eyes widened and he ran over to Oklahoma, whom he had left the unusually small girl with. It was indeed strange to see Washington without Hawaii. He has been protective over her since Pearl Harbor.
Some states had adapted the habit of worrying about Hawaii, too.

Montana shook her head slightly and turned back to her siblings. "Dad, Ukraine, and Canada can help us with this, too, right?"

Connecticut nodded and Minnesota didn't look as thrilled, but she smiled nonetheless.

"Why are we making a tree house again?" Florida and Alaska stood

next to a pile of wood planks.

"Well. . . 'Cause it's fun." Montana shrugged and walked over to a cluster of trees she had seemed to be guarding for the past few minutes. "Here. This is where we will start our village."

Alaska coughed pointedly. "Uh, village? I thought we were building a-"

Montana spun around with a goofy smile on her face, wich she had gotten from America. "Oh come on! You guys are just mad because you didn't come up with the idea."

Florida gave the short girl an 'are you serious?' look, while Alaska grinned good-humoredly. **[Maybe I spelled that right?]**

[End] kind of. . .

Bonus!

U.N. sat on the chair in his living room, listening to the rain tapping against the windowsill.

He had come back home after the meeting, in wich America had interrupted.

Would that American ever listen? If U.N. had told America to be quiet, he would just be louder and louder. If he was told to go shopping and pick up some carrots for stew, he would come back with Strawberry ice cream cake and some sort of soda.

The ringing of U.N.'s phone snapped him out of his trance.

Unknown number? He thought, confused. *Who could this be?*

With perhaps the slightest bit of interest, the country grabbed his phone and presssed the button to answer the call.

Before he could speak, a practically screaming voice came from the phone.

"DadcanHawaiihaveleavesimreally

nervousandWashingtonwillbesomad
atmeandIdontknowwhattodoand-"

"Oklahoma? Why do you have my phone? Who are you talking to? Wait a minute-"

"Hello?" U.N. cut in. "Are you alright? Who is this?"

A moment of silence.

"¡Oklahoma cuelga! ¡Cuelga el teléfono! ¡Cuelga!" (Oklahoma hang up! Put down the phone! Hang up!) A new, accented voice exclaimed in a panic.

Was he speaking Spanish?

"Uh, h-hello? Can I help Yo-" U.N. started, but the call ended, leaving him in pure confusion.

Oklahoma? Who was that?

You know what? U.N. settled back in his chair. *Today has been a strange day.*

[Yep. This is the author. It's midnight as I am posting this. Heh, I need some sleep-]

Happy 4th!

[image]

Happy fourth of July all you states! ❤U M

Hawaii The Awesome Part One

"Hawaii is missing!"

(Hawaii's P.O.V, 6:59 AM)

Across the room Florida said something in his sleep and I continued to play with my toy cat. It was a pretty kitty, he had grey fur and blue eyes. I named him Koa, which meant brave or fearless. I named him this because Montana saw Koa and said it reminded her of a 'Warrior Cat' from her books. I don't know what a Warrior Cat is, but that's okay. She said they are brave and fight for their Clan.

I have another toy kitty, too. I named her Minty, but Minty is in my room and I have a job right now so I'm not allowed to go get her. I have to watch over Florida, just so that he can't escape again like how he left us on that dirt road...
My siblings had taken shifts watching Florida, but he doesn't know this so I have to be extra sneaky and pretend to play a game with Koa.

Of course, Texas and Kentucky are Florida's roommates and they should be watching him, but Kentucky and Texas are who knows where, so when I saw that Florida could leave at any time, I decided to watch over him myself. Washington will be so proud!

Again, Florida spoke in his sleep. It wasn't Spanish like a lot of my siblings speak, which I don't. I do speak Hawaiian, but everyone gives me a weird look when I speak it. English is waaay too hard, though.

"E Florida, ke moe nei ʻoe i kahi moeʻuhane? Makemake ʻoe e ninini

i kahi pākeke wai hau i kou alo?" (Florida, are you having a nightmare? Do you want me pour pour ice water on your face?) I asked politely in Hawaiian when Florida once again said something in his sleep, but I don't know what.

Florida was suddenly quiet and I stared at him, horror crossing my face.

He wasn't snoring. Was he dead?

I rushed over to my older brother, poking his cheek to get him to wake up.

I killed him by speaking Hawaiian! What have I done?

"'Aʻole, kali, ala aʻe! ʻAʻole hiki iā ʻoe ke make i kēia manawa, ʻōpio loa ʻoe!" (No, wait, wake up! You can't die yet, you're too young!) I ran to Texas's bed, grabbed the pillow, and hit Florida with it over and over again.

Desperate times call for Desperate measures.

Florida immediately woke up, thanks to my genius quick thinking.

"Wha- Hawaii, get off!" He pushed me away and knocked Texas's pillow out of my hands. He doesn't know it yet, but he should really thank me. I just saved his life! He probably wasn't breathing!

I watched as he sat up, glaring at me. "What are you doing? You should be in bed! And where is Washington? He's just asking for someone to tell New York he stole the phone," Florida growled, smiling as he revealed his plan.

Oh, so that's who took the phone...

"You wath dead!" I exclaimed.
(By the way she did try to say 'you was dead', she just has a lisp.)

"You owe me!" I declared.

"What?" Florida looked baffled.

"Ae! You must tell me about the other countries!"

Florida narrowed his eyes at me. "Since when were you good at English?"

I looked around, eyes resting on Koa. Dad did talk about a 'cat girl' sometimes...
"Tell me about the girl cat!" I demanded, maybe a little too loudly.

"Girl cat- oh," realization hit Florida. "Yeah, there was a girl with cat ears."

My eyes lit up. I love cats, and I love new people! How amazing would it be if I met this girl? I nodded, slowly turning, picking up Koa, and leaving the room with a confused Florida still sitting on his bed behind me.

"Was that all you wanted? No explanation for hitting me with- no? Okay. That's fine," Florida called, "just make sure you go to bed..."

I *need* to find this cat girl.

I went to Washington's room first. Surely he would still have New York's phone?

Washington was asleep when I got to his room. I checked all around the room; in the nightstand by the bed, the bookshelf of movies, everywhere. When I finally found the phone under Washington's bed, I was met with another problem.

I can't read English.

Well, that is incredibly bad. I left the room and went back to mine. I swiped the screen and then had a series of apps to chose from. New York has talked to the phone before and it answered his question, so maybe I could do that.

"Country that looks like cat," I said into the phone. It didn't do anything.

"Ka ʻāina e like me he popoki lā," (Country that looks like cat) I spoke again. Still, nothing happen.

So, I knew I needed to figure this out. I tapped the white bar on the bottom of the screen and was suddenly met with a new screen. Was this Google?

Only one way to- ohhhh.

A microphone symbol. I like this. So, I clicked it.

"Country that looks like cat," I said.

"Japan. Japan lives next to (insert farm name) just South from the Countryhumans building. If you look at Japan's Instagram, she is a cat. Why is this? Well, on Dec 19, 2020, Japan posts-"

The phone was talking to me. I pressed the volume button, something I knew from watching New York, and the terrible voice was quiet. I looked at the phone screen. It was a black outline of a female country with cat ears and tail.
This was it! What I had been looking for! Just... whatever South is... of the Countryhumans building! This would be so simple!

I did the same thing. I clicked on the microphone button and said 'Countryhumans building," and it worked! It even gave me a map right to it!

I jumped up from my bedroom floor and put on my socks, shoes, and, of course, a sticker to put on my rainbow shirt that was a name tag with my name on it. I ran to the bathroom and looked at my outfit. I was wearing a rainbow shirt, blue shorts that went up to my knees, and a flower necklace.

I went downstairs and to the back door. Montana, Illinois, Dad, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Indiana, and Connecticut were all watching Star Wars in the living room.
I should be back soon, so they don't need to worry. I'll just go to the Countryhumans building and then ask where Japan's house is.

I'm not sure I like the name Japan, though. It gives me a feeling of Deja vu, and I don't like it. But it is a pretty name, so I'll ignore that. The sun is about so rise, so I'll have plenty of light, too.

So, now I'm on a *very* important quest to find Japan, and *nothing*,

not even Washington, can stop me.

I closed the glass door behind me and followed the blue line on New York's phone. I hope I'll be there soon.

I walked out into the back yard and stared at the latter. How did I get over this last time...?
I pulled myself up the top step of the latter. This is definitely harder than last time. When I finally reached the top, I stared over the top of the fence in dismay. How could I ever get over the other side?

I positioned myself so that my feet are still on the latter but my top half is over the fence, and I fell. Maybe not as gracefully as I had imagined, because I fell face-first, landed on my hands, and tipped forward onto my back, but I got over to the other side. Now I was on the dirt road.

I followed where the phone told me to go, going into the forest and past where we met Maple Leaf and Flower Crown Lady. I wish I could be friends with Flower Crown Lady, maybe we could make flower bracelets together. But she is never around anymore. I don't think she ever liked any of us, anyways. I haven't seen Maple Leaf in a while, too, now that I think about it. Too bad, I liked having family other than my brothers and sisters and Dad around.

Light filtered through the trees ahead. Had I walked through the whole forest?

(Third Person)

Maybe fifty or so feet ahead of Hawaii stood a large black building with black windows. Hawaii smiled, checking on the phone to make sure it was the Countryhumans building. When it was, she ran forward.

Farmland surrounded the building on every side except for the way Hawaii came, and a large parking lot scattered randomly with cars was right next to the building.

Upon seeing a small group of countries yelling angrily at one another next to a car in the parking lot, Hawaii ran faster. She

almost fell once or twice, but luckily she wasn't spotted by the mean countries.

When she arrived at the door to the building she made sure the name tag on her shirt was still there and knocked on the door. She ended up waiting for a bit before knocking again and hearing a voice on the other side.

"Donnez-moi une seconde, je serai là!"
(Give me a second, I'll be right there!) Footsteps got closer and closer to the door.

Hawaii frowned. They weren't speaking Spanish or Hawaiian, and it definitely wasn't English.

"‘O Hawai‘i ko‘u inoa. Ua hele mai wau e ‘ike iā Iāpana." (My name is Hawaii. I have come to see Japan.) Hawaii stated.

The footsteps stopped and were silent for a moment. The door suddenly opened and revealed a woman in a black turtleneck, black and white Leggings, and black flat heel shoes. She gasped and stared at Hawaii in shock.

"Wha- who are you?"

Hawaii The Awsome Part Two

BittyNightmare
OMG I just read the latest chapter of your alien story and I LOVE IT!!!!!!!
I drew some fanart above! It's not the greatest, but I tried!
(I totally wrote the wrong name on the paper)

Your story is AMAZING!!! You are so talented! Keep up the good work!!

_____

"Wha- who are you?"

(Washington's P.O.V)

I finally finished the sandwich.

It smelled good, and took all of my self control to not eat it. Placing the turkey sandwich on a paper plate, I plopped the fried spam pieces next to it, and next to that a bit of ketchup to dip it in.

Smiling, I made my way upstairs, walking down several long hallways. Each of our rooms are in order from the first state to join the union to the last, finished with a gold plaque on the doorframe that stated the two numbers of the two states that shared the room.

For example, Florida and Texas share a room, so their plaque would read *27, 28*.

Hawaii's room was at the very back of the house, right next to Alaska's and dad's rooms.

When I finally reached it, I imagined how happy the small girl would be when she realized I had made her breakfast. I guess that a sandwich isn't really breakfast, but she'll have to settle.

Ignoring the *51* plaque that hung over a room next to dad's, I knocked on Hawaii's door, waited for a moment, then entered the room.

The walls were a beautiful white. On the ground a mat that was the map of the state of Hawaii, taking up nearly the entire hardwood floor. Hawaii didn't have a roommate, nor did she have any toys in the entire room, with the exception of one toy cat on her made bed. Pinks, yellows, greens, blues and oranges all splashed together on paintings hung on the walls, and a large window spilled light into the room.

As usual, everything was placed neatly in their spots. The air in the room was sweet and held the tang of fresh cut pineapple.

I went to her bed, but it was empty. I glanced towards a white door at the side of the room. It led to a bathroom connected to the room and shared by Alaska.

I set the plate down on Hawaii's bed and knocked on the door. "Hawaii? I made you breakfast. It'll be out here when you're done."

There was no answer.

Anxiety churned in my stomach. "Hawaii? Hello?"
I slowly opened the door, giving time for someone to yell at me if they were in there whist keeping their dignity intact.

Nothing. The bathroom was empty.
My heart dropped.

I made my way into dad's room. Empty.
Montana's room?
Empty.
Florida's room?
He was asleep. No Hawaii.
Downstairs with the others passed out watching Star Wars?

No Hawaii.

Fearing the worst, I ran around the house, checking each room.
45, 46?
No.
31, 32?
33, 34?
10, 11?
49?

There was no Hawaii.
She was gone.

So were her shoes.

As I searched her room, I found more and more missing.
Her flower necklace was gone.
Her name tag was gone.

She left us.

(Alaska's P.O.V)

"Silence!"
A voice boomed throughout the room. When everyone's attention was focused on the girl who'd yelled, she cast her cold gaze to Oklahoma.
"And you let her eat the leaves?"

Oklahoma went red but nodded.

The room was eerily quiet as the girl spoke, as though she held some unspoken power over the people inside. Each and every one of them seemed to look at her like a duckling would its mother, waiting obediently for directions.

Her name was Washington D.C, also known as "District".

District had sky-black hair hidden by the president wig much like Washington's. But hers only went to her shoulders, and was tied like a ponytail with a black and velvet ribbon. She looked over the room with forced disdain.

I knew that it was forced because just ten minutes ago she came to me in tears telling me that she didn't know what to do.

My siblings come to me in times like this: when they don't know what to do and have no one better to talk to. I seem to be everyone's personal therapist. I wonder if they know that.

There's no one for me to talk to. No one to fret about Hawaii with, no one to accuse who did what and no one to tell me that I'm okay. I guess we just tolerate each other.

That's why, now that Hawaii is missing, I'm beginning to wonder. Sure it's fun to make fun of my siblings, watch movies, or whatever else, but it never once in all of my years occur to me that we are just a stack of cards. When one of us is gone, the rest...

And so we must come to a conclusion:
Save Hawaii,
Or don't.
Help,
Or tell dad.
Do something,
Or do nothing.

And so we hold a vote.

One vote to save her ourselves, the other to tell dad. As she is who she is, District's vote counts for three; her, dad, and Hawaii.

When District speaks, her voice shakes. "Anyone that wants to do this alone, raise your hand."

Rhode Island.
Iowa.
Texas.
Utah.
Alabama.
New Hampshire.
Maine.
Louisiana.
Arkansas.

Colorado.
Tennessee.
Wisconsin.
Vermont.
Nebraska.
South Dakota.

Vote count: 15

"Those who want to tell dad, raise your hand."

Montana.
California.
Delaware.
North Carolina.
New York.
Ohio.
Oregon.
Illinois.
Minnesota.
Arizona.
Nevada.
Pennsylvania.
West Virginia.

Vote count: 13

And those who didn't vote:
Missouri.
Mississippi.
Wyoming.
Connecticut.
North Dakota.
Oklahoma.
Idaho.
Georgia.
Indiana.
South Carolina.
South Dakota.
Maryland.
Michigan.

Kansas.
Massachusetts.
New Jersey.
New Mexico.
Alaska.
Kentucky.
Florida.
Washington.

Count: 21

We hold out breaths as District thinks who she will vote for. In the end, it is decided: we tell dad.

Outrage erupts. A chorus of voices all wanting to be heard, fighting over the right decision, but it is useless. We can't save Hawaii. Even District's demands for silence is ignored.

But when the room quiets, I think that everyone has come to the same startling realization: whatever we had created over the past few weeks, stitched together with sticks and twine, it was gone now; all of it.

Without Hawaii there would be no tree house in the woods, there would be no Canada or Ukraine coming to tell stories, and there would be no giggling and songs in a funny language to wake up to. We would be alone again. And our light would be gone.

Every muscle on my body screamed for me to cry, to begin sobbing uncontrollably and wish that this was all a bad dream. That I was just a fox in the woods or a leaf in the breeze, dreaming of what it was like to be alive. But I did not wake up. I would never wake up from this dream.
Because this is it: dream or nothing.

I would rather be nothing than be dreaming.

Hawaii's P.O.V

I love spam! I think while shoving the food into my mouth. *This is the best day ever!*